

## **Paris, New York and Madrid:**

### **Picasso and Dalí before Great International Exhibitions**

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Dalí's attitude toward Picasso began with admiration, which later became competition, and finally a behavior that, still preserving some features of the former two, also included provocative and exhibitionist harassment, simulated or expressed rivalry, and recognition. As we shall see, this attitude reached its climax at the great international exhibitions. On the other hand, Picasso always stayed away from these provocations and kept a completely opposite, yet watchful and serene behavior toward the impetuous painter from Figueres.

Paris 1937, New York 1939 and Madrid 1951: these three occasions in these three major cities are good examples of the climaxes in the Picasso and Dalí confrontation. These international events show their relative divergences, postures, commitments and ways of conceiving art, as well as their positions in relation to Spain. After examining the origins of their relationship, which began in 1926, these three spaces and times shall guide our analysis and discussion of this suggestive relationship.

The cultural centers of Madrid, Paris and New York were particularly important in Picasso's and Dalí's artistic influence, as well as scenes of their agreements and disagreements. On the one hand, Picasso had already lived in Madrid at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, while Paris had then become the main scene of his artistic development, and New York played a relevant role in his self-promotion. On the other hand, Dalí arrived in Madrid in the early 1920s, and its atmosphere allowed him to get to Paris by the end of this decade, although New York would later become his main advertising and art promotion center. Finally, the work by both artists competed again in Madrid as the Spanish Francoist Administration always intended to gain the support of Spanish figures of international relevance.

This artistic and promotional route began for Dalí in 1922 upon his arrival in Madrid at the age of 18. He moved to Madrid to enroll at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts of San Fernando, and stayed in the Residencia de Estudiantes, where he became close friends with poet Federico García Lorca, filmmaker Luis Buñuel, and writer José Moreno Villa, who helped him pave the way to success. Given Dalí's early admiration for Picasso, one may wonder what happened during the war for Dalí's world of relationships and postures in Spanish and French circles to change so drastically. Disagreement and shock after this Spanish drama—together with the hard experience

through which his family had gone— had a profound impact on Dalí. However, little can be understood from these changes in a personality so given to radicalism and extremism without the revealing analysis of his political evolution. In this sense, we must highlight a study on this issue by Javier Tusell (1999: 279-305) titled *Politics in Salvador Dalí*. We are interested in recalling his characterization of some stretches in Dalí's political evolution up to the outbreak of the war, which marks the beginning of his difficult relationship with the Spanish Republican Administration, as well as with Picasso.

It should be borne in mind that politics had not interested the young Dalí much. Nevertheless, after his visit to Paris in 1929 and his admission into the surrealist group in 1930, he began to use politics provocatively, with some approaches to the communist party, in which surrealists were interested. The proclamation of the Second Spanish Republic in 1931 provided him with new opportunities to provoke, such as the conference that he offered in September in the Cultural Center in Barcelona, in which he approached a still very weak Trotskyist and Catalanian communism. At the same time, he became interested in Lenin and, since his accession to power in 1933, he also became fascinated by the figure —yet not the ideas— of Hitler. However, the use of these icons in his paintings gave rise to all kind of speculations and caused him numerous problems and censorship among his surrealist colleagues. Indeed, Breton led and staged a trial of Dalí in January and February 1934 for praising Hitlerian fascism that led to his expulsion from the surrealist group. However, it is also true that Breton and Dalí kept good relationships and frequently collaborated in the magazine *Minotaure* —in spite of the fact that the former paid more attention to communist orthodoxy and the latter to the subversive aspects of the surrealist movement. Not even Dalí's visit to New York in 1934, loaded with success and new aspirations, affected his relationship with Breton, who —in spite of nicknaming him Avida Dollars in 1935— still kept receiving his collaborations for *Minotaure* in 1936 and entrusted him the scenography of the London International Surrealist Exhibition, held in summer in the New Burlington Galleries.

The escalation of violence and political rivalry in Spain must however have worried Dalí much more. In 1934, coinciding with the revolutionary process preceding the Civil War, Dalí and Gala suffered a serious attempt on their lives in an Ampurdán village on their way to France. The painter later commented that his picture *Soft Construction with Boiled Beans (Premonition of Civil War)* —which he had begun after

coming back from Paris in October 1936 and subtitled *Premonition of Civil War* in one of his classically opportunistic moves— was the result of the disgusting events that he had witnessed in 1934 revolutionary Spain. The outbreak of the Civil War caught him in London and, according to his patron Edward James, Dalí seems to have showed himself distinctly in favor of the Spanish Republic and against “Franco the Bandit”. The summary execution of Lorca at the beginning of the conflict must have startled him, as well as all the violence that devastated Spain, which he would later capture in his new works —see, for instance, *Autumnal cannibalism*, an oil painting from late 1936, coinciding with the serious and devouring harassment that he was suffering in Madrid (Tusell, 1999: 280-98). Both works were exhibited in New York in December 1936 and caused great impact among the American public (Jeffett, 2014: 93).

The needy Republican Government turned to several measures to attract international attention, and soon retook the invitation to take part in the great World Exposition that was then being prepared for Paris in 1937 under the title *Exposition Internationale des Artes et Techniques dans la Vie Moderne*. The Government intended to promote a Spanish pavilion designed as a true propaganda weapon to support the Republican cause. Picasso’s collaboration was considered very early and Dalí’s was not ruled out early either. Besides, both artists must have kept a cordial relationship. Indeed, a postcard sent by Dalí and Gala to Picasso from Italy on August 19, 1936, a month after the outbreak of the war (Madeline, 2003: 97), shows that they could be said to have shared their concern about that bloodstained, chaotic and violent Spain about which they were constantly informed and which had prevented Dalí and Gala from reaching Port Lligat (Jeffett, 2014: 88). On the other hand, Edward James himself also referred to these initial contacts with Dalí for his participation in the Spanish pavilion in Paris. He said to have been told by Dalí himself that it was “the proposal of an arriviste, but he later declared that both factions looked rather *creepy* to him”. As Javier Tusell (1999: 296-9) suggests, Dalí “might have attempted to get it and failed, perhaps because he had already been at odds with communist political orthodoxy”. Anyway, we shall soon see that the proposal was indeed made by communist painter and General Director of Fine Arts Josep Renau.

Picasso’s relationship with the Spanish Republican Administration, on the contrary, did not start on the right foot. However, after the outbreak of the war, it soon became much more fluid and lasting than Dalí’s due to the former’s declared support for the Republican side. At least since June 1932, the Madrid Museum of Modern Art had

intended through its director, critic Juan de la Encina, to take to Madrid the large monographic Picasso exhibition that was then being held in Paris. This initiative was even dealt with in Paris in September by vicedirector Timoteo Pérez Rubio, yet without the approval of the Board of the Museum, which only showed itself willing to collaborate with other cultural institutions. Nonetheless, Juan de la Encina let the Board know that the exhibition could be held in the Museum in the autumn of 1933, since the Ministry of National Education and Fine Arts was to meet security and transport costs (Tusell, 1999: 232-3). Nevertheless, the first official contacts between the Spanish Second Republic and Picasso to organize a tribute exhibition in Madrid set off in September 1933. Indeed, Director of Fine Arts Ricardo de Orueta, who was also from Málaga, contacted the Spanish Ambassador in Paris Salvador de Madariaga with this purpose, but failed to put the project into motion as the ambassador stressed the painter's lack of interest in the initiatives of Spanish diplomacy (Cabañas Bravo, 2007a: 35 and 167; 2007b: 143-4; 2014: 57; Tusell, 1981: 34).

Nevertheless, Picasso visited Spain in 1934 and met Ernesto Giménez Caballero in San Sebastián, with whom he talked about a Picasso exhibition in Madrid organized by the Spanish Republic. Indeed, the Republic had sent a representative the year before to communicate Picasso their willingness to organize it, as well as their inability to guarantee the safety of his paintings, although Guardia Civil was humorously suggested to keep an eye on the railway during their transport. According to the writer, Picasso told this anecdote among a group of fascists that included José Antonio Primo de Rivera, who assured him that someday they would pay for art insurance and that Guardia Civil would be there, but only to receive Picasso (Tusell, 1981: 36). Anyway, the General Board of Fine Arts, suppressed in September 1935, had to wait for conservative governments to pass (from September 1933 to February 1936) and the arrival of new popular front governments to retake similar initiatives (Cabañas Bravo, 2014: 56-64). Fortunately, good sense guided the next important initiative for a Picasso exhibition, so it neither came specifically and directly from official representatives, nor consisted of an individual exhibition to be held in Madrid.

The Spanish Civil War broke out shortly afterwards and the issue of supporting Picasso was then approached in a different way by the new director of fine arts, with whom Dalí would soon be at odds. Indeed, with war in the background, socialist Largo Caballero formed a new Government in early September 1936. Jesús Hernández was appointed Minister of Public Education and Fine Arts, while young, impetuous,

Valencian poster designer Josep Renau was appointed director of fine arts on September 9. He mainly looked for international projection in Paris, which he visited on several occasions. Thus, he undertook a remarkable task of reorganization, centralization and subordination of the services under his competence (mainly management, promotion, teaching, and culture and art safeguard). Within a different framework, he even played a parallel, influential, creative and theoretical role.

His propaganda activity soon took him to contact the Spanish artists living in Paris to ask them for their collaboration. These artists were given singular prominence in the Republican adventure that finally resulted in the Spanish pavilion for the 1937 *Exposition Internationale des Arts et Techniques dans la Vie Moderne*. Renau, who clearly understood the transcendence of the period and the obtained support and results, soon wanted to leave a written record of his role among the promoters of this experience. In fact, he redrafted many times a manuscript that he finally titled *Fate and Troubles with Guernica and its Mother*,<sup>1</sup> which put forward his evocative memories and experiences in relation to the commission and execution of the famous mural painting, as well as numerous references to his stays in Paris under the mission of achieving support from artists living there and the subsequent organization and installation of this Spanish representation.

However, Renau's official business in Paris did not have this only aim, as another vital activity also took place in relation to international awareness of the current Republican Government's efforts to safeguard Spanish artistic heritage. Besides, given the transcendence of his action in warlike times, Renau left multiple references in articles and interviews about these official missions in Paris, together with other activities mentioned in passing, such as his direction and management of Valencian magazine *Nueva Cultura* between 1925 and 1937 (Renau, 1977: xii-xxiv), when his mediation enabled the first publication of Dora Maar's pictures showing different evolutionary states in the making of *Guernica*. However, regarding his memories, particularly those in the aforementioned manuscripts and books, it should be borne in mind that—in spite of septuagenarian Renau's willingness to place events correctly—his warnings about his own hesitations and lack of certainty are also frequent, as no documents are preserved.

It is however true that Picasso's collaboration soon appeared in the list of tasks that Renau resolved to undertake even before visiting Paris. Indeed, immediately after taking over his post in Madrid, he suggested Jesús Fernández the appointment of Pablo

Picasso as director of the Museo del Prado, an intention that the minister and journalist announced to the press on September 12, 1936 and put into effect by means of the corresponding decree signed by President Manuel Azaña.<sup>2</sup> Renau commented that his proposal was preceded by an ‘exploring letter’ written by his Secretary Antonio del Toro and signed by himself. This letter was answered by Picasso himself with deeply moved acceptance, remaining at the Government’s service and stressing his understanding of the Republican cause in the ongoing war (Cabañas Bravo, 2007a: 167 and 2007b: 144-5; Renau, 1981b: 18).

Before mid September 1936, the French press had already announced this offer to Picasso to direct the Museo del Prado, and Paul Éluard himself let Gala know in a letter on September 15 (Jeffett, 2014: 88). Communication with Picasso may have been channeled through Luis Araquistáin since his appointment as Spanish ambassador on September 19 (Tusell, 1981: 38), as he became an enthusiastic instigator of the Spanish participation in the 1937 World Exposition. In any case, Picasso’s enthusiastic acceptance was the first symptom of his support for the Republican faction. Regarding artistic creation, this symptom was confirmed when Picasso, on his own initiative, began to etch in the early days of January 1937 the two plates known as *Sueño y mentira de Franco* (*The Dream and Lie of Franco*). These plates, finished in mid June 1937, were a series of vignette-shaped small images satirizing Franco’s action and condemning his destruction of culture. However, Picasso never visited Madrid or Valencia to take over the post that he had accepted.

Renau soon travelled to Paris. He has repeatedly described this stay in Paris as an official visit that took place in December 1936 and involved the specific mission of sealing the collaboration of the Spanish artists living there for the pavilion, bearing in mind that Picasso’s collaboration was his main aim. Their meetings finally ended up with their collaboration and the commission that finally resulted in the famous mural painting known as *Guernica*. Shortly after putting an end to his exile after Franco’s death, Renau also gave rather hasty interviews to the press, which was avid for knowledge on that period and the famous commission of *Guernica*. Renau sometimes expressed that “he was commissioned to give Miró a second place” (Arancibia, 1977). However, his much more pondered 1981 memoirs express that —like Picasso— Spanish artists living in Paris gave a positive response. There was one only exception though: the second of the prepared appointments, corresponding to Salvador Dalí,

which turned out to be such a fiasco that it determined that he did not finally take part in the pavilion.

It is difficult to verify the exact date on which the sour meeting between Renau and Dalí took place. We tend to think that, all in all, his meeting with Dalí may well have taken place in Renau's second visit to Paris, as we know he also visited Picasso, who gave him Dora Maar's pictures for their publication in magazine *Nueva Cultura*. Anyway, regardless of the exact date, their aforementioned argument seems to have definitely broken Dalí's connection with this initiative of the Spanish Republic. We do not know whether this fact immediately affected his relationship with Picasso, since Dalí seems to have been one of the visitors that *Guernica* had in late May 1937 (Jeffett, 2014: 93) while Picasso was working on it in his studio at the Rue des Grands Augustins. However, it certainly did in the long run.

This was the beginning of the process of construction of a new exhibition space that became a landmark due to its brilliant Spanish rationalist architecture, the effective presentation of its propaganda messages and socio-political condemnation, and its exceptional artistic content. The last issue—which praised from popular to vanguard artistic proposals—comprised from a meticulous sample of Spanish popular art and folklore to the innovative works of painters such as Picasso (*Guernica*) and Miró (*Peasant*), sculptors such as Julio González (*Montserrat*), Alberto (*Spanish Village*), and Calder (*Mercury Fountain*), as well as those of many other artists, attractions and the powerful response to Renau's photomontages, which were presented for the first time to the façade of the building that housed them.

Juan Negrín's ministerial reorganization in early April 1938 meant the communists' removal from the ministry of Public Education and Renau's resignation, which was accepted on April 22.

A letter to Buñuel after the Civil War (Gibson, 1998: 499-503), in which Dalí identified him with the losing side and reproached him for having continued with them, also provided a clear explanation for the reasons behind his new anti-Marxism and complete abandonment of every left-wing political position. Even his change from radical left-wing politics to the most traditional and Catholic right-wing side was due to the hardship his family had endured during the war. The family house had been looted, and his sister had been imprisoned and tortured by Republican secret services. Perhaps also raped, she had gone insane, refused to eat or utter a single word, and wetted and soiled herself. Meanwhile, his father—who was no reactionary before—had become a

fanatical Francoist. However, even before the letter, Dalí had already sent unambiguous signals of his new political position in a short stay in Spain before travelling to the United States where he contacted intellectuals such as Eugenio Montes, Dionisio Ridruejo and Rafael Sánchez Mazas (Tusell, 1999: 301-2).

There is no doubt then, as several historians point out (Gibson, 1998: 499-503; Tusell, 1999: 298-302 and Jeffett, 2014: 100, among others), that the most important reason for Dalí's radical political shift was the brutality of the Spanish civil war generally and more specifically his family's harsh experience of it. However, Dalí still had to confront Picasso publically —this is because both were famous Spanish painters, but they supported different factions in the civil war. A significant opportunity came again with an international exposition: this time, on the other side of the Atlantic.

Indeed, two years after the Paris Exposition, a new edition of the World's Fair took place in New York —a suitable metaphor for the transfer of the cultural capital from the Old to the New World following a war that drastically changed the artistic scenario. The United States took the opportunity of the 150-year commemoration of the Government of George Washington to stage *The World of Tomorrow*, whose configuration began on June 15, 1936. Five months later, the Second Spanish Republic received the first invitation signed by President Roosevelt to take part with a pavilion, practically at the same time its Paris counterpart was being closed. In spite of the great success of that total artistic effort that had drawn international attention on the Republican cause, it was not until September 1, 1938 that the Spanish Ambassador in Washington, Fernando de los Ríos, let the Exposition committee know of the Negrín Government's decision to take part in the event. In the middle of an offensive by the rebel faction, the Republic was going through hard times, yet decided to make a last effort to convince foreign nations of the need to revoke the Non-Intervention Pact and actively fight fascism. At this stage, experience had already proven the importance of propaganda, a key factor in the new project, which followed Paris project's concept of highlighting the Republic's achievements and merits by means of photomontages and art works in traditional media.

Unfortunately, the Republican pavilion was never inaugurated. The end of the installation of the Spanish contribution was expected for April 1939, since the World Exposition was to open its doors on April 30, so that in fact it coincided with Franco's victory proclamation (Murga Castro, 2011: 222). The United States' recognition of the dictator's regime on April 2 entailed offering the Republican pavilion to the Francoist



Government on the following day and the subsequent cancellation of all previous Republican preparations, which ended up as an incomplete project that —had it finally been inaugurated— would have become another landmark in Spanish contemporary art.

The new Spanish pavilion for the 1939 New York World's Fair was therefore conceived as the last Republican SOS call, but in a much less warmongering tone than its Paris predecessor. With this purpose, a team of architects, intellectuals and artists was led by commissioners Roberto Fernández Balbuena and Jesús Martí. The project, as the previous one in Paris, combined tradition and vanguard through the inclusion of elements of Spanish popular culture and contemporary creation. It was meant to become, above all, a huge propaganda weapon for the Spanish Second Republic. Thus, several artists were commissioned to make works in honor of American commitment to support Spanish democracy. Joaquim Sunyer worked on a huge canvas on the *Erica Reed* cargo ship, and Luis Quintanilla was the author of the famous five frescoes then titled *The Actual Moment in Spain*, which —apart from condemning the impact of war on civil population— also portrayed members of the Lincoln Brigade and American Red Cross nurses. He also worked for the Joan Rebull project, who was commissioned to produce a huge sculpture to decorate the pavilion's façade.

To support these art pieces, commissioners also reused some of the works from the Spanish pavilion in Paris, whose shipping was coordinated from Madrid, Paris and New York. Thus, a key piece in the Paris pavilion was recovered by Sert and Lacasa: Alexander Calder's *Mercury Fountain*, the only work by a foreign artist, which emphasized the natural richness of the Iberian Peninsula and provided American support for the Spanish cause. Collections of regional costumes —meanwhile preserved in the Musée de l'Homme— and the ceramics contributed by the couple Isabel Oyarzábal and Ceferino Palencia for the Paris Exposition were also included in this exhibition discourse.

In this line, the presence of photography was again a key factor that found its prime example in Renau's photomontages. For this occasion Renau suggested the series *13 puntos de Negrín*, which described Republican President Negrín's three minimum conditions for negotiations to put an end to the Spanish Civil War (Renau, 1980: 15). Unlike the Paris pavilion, photomontages were now to be exhibited indoors following the specifications of the Board of Design of the New York's Fair, which homogenized the exterior aspect of all buildings in the Hall of Nations and allowed little variation in façade configuration. However, Renau's intervention was not the only presence of

photography in the project, since the aim was taking advantage of the New York's Fair as a platform to spread advances in the Spanish Second Republic and, more precisely, artistic-heritage safeguard some months before the Figueres Agreement was signed.

Fernando de los Ríos planned to exhibit “first order painters of those who are still with us”, among which one stood out: he whose intervention in the 1937 Exposition had become an icon much more significant than the Spanish Civil War and a symbol of the terrible impact of war conflicts on population —Pablo Picasso; and *Guernica*. Since the closing of the Paris Exposition, the famous painting had taken a long tour across Europe to get support for the Republican cause. Coinciding with the scheduled opening of the Spanish pavilion, *Guernica* arrived in New York from Le Havre aboard the *Normandie* on May 1, 1939 escorted by President Juan Negrín himself, only one day before the opening of the World's Fair. This voyage was possible thanks to the collaboration of the Spanish Refugee Relief Campaign (SRRC), AAC, Peter Rhodes, member of the aforementioned committee, Juan Larrea and Picasso himself (Chipp, 1988: 160).

Some research suggests that its arrival could be related to the MoMA exhibition *Art in our Time*, which had been inaugurated by Director Alfred H. Barr on May 8 (Van Hensbergen, 2005: 129-30) to celebrate the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this New York museum and included other works by Picasso. However, Renau left a record of Sidney Janis' petition for this work to become part of the SRRC campaign in different locations across America (Renau, 1981: 16-8), insisting with further detail on the Herschel B. Chipp process (1981: 116-8). Indeed, a letter to Margaret Palmer dated January 3, 1939 tells us that Picasso had already foreseen that his most celebrated icon would be exhibited at the Republican pavilion in New York (Pérez Segura, 2007: 216, and 2012: 124).

The presence of this work in the event provided vital support for the propaganda strategy of Spanish organizers. Indeed, Fernando de los Ríos had drawn the attention of the Ministers of Propaganda and State on May 1, 1937 on the impression made by ‘savage action’ in *Guernica* on the American press two years before the canvas reached the United States. As this was not finally possible, its presentation did not take place in MoMA but in a nearby location: the Valentine Gallery, where a relevant inauguration was organized on May 5 and was attended by authorities of the Spanish Republican Government —led by Negrín himself— as well as other American outstanding political, social and cultural figures.

Afterwards, Sidney Janis prepared a *Guernica* tour, whose first and last stages were Los Angeles on August 10 and Chicago on November 15, 1939, respectively. This tour was part of the huge retrospective exhibition *Picasso, Forty Years of his Art*, organized by Alfred Barr for MoMA, where Picasso wanted *Guernica* to be kept during the Second World War and from where Barr loaned it to different American exhibition centers (Chipp, 1981: 118-22). It was evident that Republican authorities intended to repeat the experience of the 1937 Paris pavilion when they began the process in which the arrival of *Guernica* to a high-spirited New York, escorted by President Negrín himself, was incorporated. Their last card was the attraction generated by Picasso's mural canvas.

Nevertheless, while Republican Government representatives and the involved artists were working on the New York pavilion project, there was again a striking absence: that of Salvador Dalí, who was about to reach America and start a new decade-long period, yet was still a scarcely-known painter for the American public and critic. In this sense, unlike Picasso, his representation in the aforementioned MoMA exhibition was limited to two works owned by MoMA itself: *La persistance de la mémoire* (*The Persistence of Memory*) and *L'Angéus de Gala* (*The Angelus of Gala*). Again, for the second time, the Republican Government made no commission to Dalí for the Spanish pavilion. In response, Dalí presented at the New York World's Fair a whole pavilion of his works under the title *Dream of Venus*.

The original idea had come from architect Ian Woodner, who had suggested that gallery owner Julien Levy in 1938 built a Surrealist House at the heart of the World Fair, whose design was finally entrusted to Salvador Dalí. Levy's businesses and contacts finally led to the creation of the Dalí World's Fair Corporation, integrated by Dalí himself, Woodner and Levy, as well as William Morris, Edward James, I. D. Wolf, W. M. Gardner and Philip Wittenberg (Aguer & Fanés, 1999: 59, 84). Dalí signed a rather unfortunate contract with Edward James (Schaffner, 2002) for the design of this pavilion in which the only condition was that siren-dressed women had to appear in an aquatic show. His proposal finally consisted of a particular recreation of the feminine world divided into a 'dry section' and a 'wet section'. It was a space full of visual metaphors and Freudian obsessions reflected in a true stage in which scenography and performance shaped a total art work. Unlike the purest rationalism of the International Style followed in the architecture of most pavilions, which was indeed far from the

futurist ode in the World's Fair's motto (*The World of Tomorrow*), the space devised by Dalí was closer to a funfair seen through the lens of surrealism.

The building stood as an amorphous organic mass ending in coral-like protuberances, fragments of feminine mannequins, crustaceans and visual quotes from Botticelli's *The Birth of Venus* and Leonardo da Vinci's *St. John the Baptist*. Scantly dressed models poked out of some openings on the façade attracting the public's attention and inviting them to penetrate the mysterious pavilion. In its first part, corresponding to the 'wet section', the dream vision of the goddess of love was supplemented by the promised models diving almost naked in a large fishbowl full of sea weeds and creatures. In the second section, the 'dry one', the goddess of love was sleeping and surrounded by Dalí's current imagery: soft watches, fire giraffes, umbrellas, bone remains, a piano-mannequin and drawer-shaped human bodies. These elements were used in the press to attract the public some weeks before its inauguration ("Dalí Surrealistic Show...", 1939: 36).

This intervention by Dalí clearly pointed out a new way to understand art in relation to mass culture that would finally shape the artist's American period. As explained by Félix Fanés, although it is difficult to determine the exact moment Dalí became interested in this procedure, his experimentations with filming, photography and publicity had already drawn a differentiating line, and also responded to a new kind of spectator: from individual to collective (Aguer & Fanés, 1999: 12, 115-7).

Already the two main references of Spanish art abroad, Picasso and Dalí kept their opposite positions in great artistic events in the following decades. Dalí had not only grown apart from the spheres of Spanish artists exiled in United States, but had returned to Spain in 1948 and the Francoist regime had turned him into a big star. Consequently, his opposition to Picasso, who was still critical of the Francoist dictatorship, found its best stage in the opposing attitudes both artists showed (mimicked by other artists) for the 1<sup>st</sup> Hispano-American Biennial of Art held in Madrid in 1951. Again, they showed two very different ways to understand art and the artist's action.

The success of the first edition of this Hispano-American Biennial of Art, a huge contest organized by the Instituto de Cultura Hispánica (ICH) with the close collaboration of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, undoubtedly made it the most significant and important art event in Spain under the Francoist regime (Cabañas Bravo, 1996b: xv-xvi). Nevertheless, its organization and celebration led to strong protests

from the exiled Spanish artists. This was prompted by those living in Paris —led by Picasso— and quickly extended to South America in spite of Dalí's opposition and call for action (Cabañas Bravo, 1996a: 21-91). However, in regard to dialogue between the Francoist regime and these highly reputed Spanish painters, the reader should bear in mind the relevance that the Biennial of Art had in trying to reconcile and return exiled Spanish painters to their motherland (Cabañas Bravo, 2005: 467-84; 2007d: 119-20, 229, 248-50, 330-45).

However, the new biennial contest developed throughout the 1950s under the so-called “policy of Spanishness” was more aimed at obtaining diplomatic benefit than at a purely artistic and cultural objective, although the latter also bore great importance. It was held on three occasions and gathered artists from the community of Hispanic countries, including Portugal, Brazil, the Philippines, United States and Canada as honorary guests. It was characterized by a series of common formal, organizational and aesthetic elements such as its official framework, and its measured and eclectic orientation. All editions shared a similar regulation frame (with a classical contest division, and a rather peculiar selection system): supplementary exhibitions were held to support and highlight the contest section, and anthological exhibitions were held with promotional purposes after the closing of the Biennial of Art. Externally, a large group of artists persistently kept a clear attitude of opposition and boycott, as the Biennial was called by a dictatorial regime.

Contest statutes themselves established its development in Spain, although this location was alternated with other Hispanic countries. The 1<sup>st</sup> Biennial of Art achieved great success in Madrid between October 1951 and February 1952, concluding with an anthological exhibition in Barcelona. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Biennial of Art was promoted as a Caribbean Biennial Contest and took place in Havana between May and September 1954, being supplemented with 9-month anthological exhibitions in Dominican Republic (Santo Domingo), Venezuela (Caracas and Mérida), and Colombia (Bucaramanga, Medellín, Cali, Popayán, Tunja and Bogotá). Finally, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Biennial of Art was back in Spain and took place in Barcelona between September 1955 and January 1956, concluding with anthological exhibitions in Zaragoza and Geneva.

The most important edition was however the first one, due to its strong and significant impact on the orientation of the Spanish art policy, and its great success, which allowed contest continuity and increased its propaganda potential as an effective tool for the Spanishness policy. It was inaugurated in Madrid by General Franco amidst

great solemnity and ostentation on the significant day of October 12, 1951: Columbus Day and commemoration year of the 5<sup>th</sup> Centenary of the birth of Isabella the Catholic and Christopher Columbus. The exhibition was peppered with controversies that came from the participating artists, the kind of art exhibited and the winning artists, who also contributed by shunning the privileges of academic art and its promotion (Cabañas Bravo, 1996b: 551-625). We shall see how Picasso and Dalí were not unaware of the remarkable resonance and great success of this event, which was soon to be taken to Barcelona in an anthological exhibition.

Leopoldo Panero, the Biennial General Secretary, had already begun to organize the 1<sup>st</sup> Biennial of Art much earlier. In November 1950 he announced some innovative provisional statutes that referred to the international importance of the “Spanish painter” Pablo Picasso and Spain’s need to undergo “detoxification” of academic panels of judges who had, “little by little, led our Utrillo, Picasso, Miró and Mateo Hernández to abandon us”. However, the protests of now displaced academic artists forced its orientation toward eclecticism. Panero assured that the list of direct invitations —sent on May 1951 to more than 150 highly reputed artists including exiles— included the names of Miró, Picasso and Dalí, who were clear references for the youth and encouraged the participation of foreign and exiled artists. However, their political posture differed widely (Cabañas Bravo, 1996b: 303-31): from Picasso’s combative rejection through Miró’s polite inhibition to Dalí’s enthusiastic adhesion.

Indeed, Picasso left the invitation unanswered and even led the signing of a manifesto in early September 1951 with other Spanish exiles in Paris such as Baltasar Lobo, Arturo Serrano Plaja and Antonio Aparicio (in the organizing committee) calling for Spanish and Latin American artists to boycott the Biennial of Art. They argued that it was called for by the Francoist regime to gain prestige in America, and proposed oppositional acts and exhibitions: a counter-Biennial in Paris and major Latin American cities. The manifesto initially had little impact on the participation of artists living in Spain and some invited countries, since the contesting selection had already been made when the manifesto was published on the Spanish press on October 1, yet it was soon used to show Picasso’s resentful attitude and political implications. Some days later, when Dalí announced his outright opposition to the manifesto, Picasso’s attitude was described as “antipatriotic” and “communistoid”. The manifesto and its contest rejection proposal got greater impact by means of counter-Biennial exhibitions abroad. Several rejection actions were developed, among which the one organized by the Free Art

Workshop on October 12 in the Caracas Cultural Center stood out, as it included anti-Francoist cultural activities, was supported by Picasso and was reopened on November 30 in the Galerie Henri Tronche in Paris. Nevertheless, the largest and most important exhibition gathered outstanding Mexican and exiled Spanish artists, and was inaugurated with some delay on February 12, 1952 in the Pavilion Flor in the Bosque de Chapultepec (Mexico). Apart from this, we must also recall that the formula of protest writings and the counter-Biennial staged by Picasso was later used abroad to reprobate the following Biennial editions (Cabañas Bravo, 1996a: 11-149, and 1996b: 303-26 and 515-50).

On the other hand, it is interesting that the appearance of Dalí ironically triggered a call for Spanish and Latin American artists to take part in the Biennial of Art, in contrast to Picasso's opposing and boycotting attitude. Indeed, Dalí had been included in the same list of invitations as Picasso. The press had already stated since early August that Dalí was in Barcelona and had decided to take part with his *The Madonna of Portlligat*, *The Basket of Bread* and other current productions on which he was then working and that would highlight the mysticism of Dalí such as *Christ*, based on the visions of St. John of the Cross. His participation—which Dalí expected to make him famous in his own country—and his preparation for the Biennial inauguration were greatly publicized to encourage prestigious Spanish and foreign artists to take part. However, on the inauguration eve, ICH Director Alfredo Sánchez Bella announced the agreement reached with Dalí, who would exhibit new works but would not attend the Biennial of Art until January 1952, near closing, since he was obliged by contract to exhibit first in the Lefevre Gallery in London; the collection would then travel directly to Madrid.

From that time on, as previously advanced, comments in the Spanish press constantly alluded to Dalí's patriotic attitude—accordingly, official doors remained definitely open for him in Spain—in opposition to Picasso's "antipatriotic" stance—about whom distrust grew. However, this was not the end of Dalí's action, who insisted repeatedly on the contrast between his stance and Picasso's. Panero himself—who knew how to attract Dalí's figure as a response to Picasso's rejection—also managed through critic Rafael Santos Torroella to encourage Dalí to give a conference on this issue within the Biennial of Art program. It was initially planned to take place at the stairs of the Palace of Libraries and Museums—which housed the Biennial headquarters—yet for security reasons it was finally moved to Teatro María Guerrero.

Nevertheless, on the eve of Dalí's arrival in Madrid, Panero himself called a press conference in the Museum of Modern Art to present him to masses of journalists, photographers, NO-DO newsreel producers, etc., who questioned him on the conference, the Biennial of Art, Picasso, etc., thus causing expectation to shoot up.

The following day found Madrid taken by this controversial artistic environment caused by the Biennial of Art. Dalí gave his extremely well known conference *Picasso i yo* in the Teatro María Guerrero. Two days after Dalí's conference—in which Picasso was asked to “renounce to communism” and come back to Spain; one of the most notorious events in the cultural history of the time in Madrid—several intellectual and public figures offered Dalí a tribute banquet in the Palace Hotel. This banquet had great significance, since it was interpreted as a strong support for renovation by Spanish avant-garde intellectuals, politicians and journalists. Dalí—upon leaving Madrid to head for Port Lligat— even played the joke of bidding farewell to Madrid by paying for a mass service in the Church of the Holy Ghost in the Spanish National Research Council to ask god to enlighten Álvarez de Sotomayor and separate him from his intransigence. Dalí intended to accompany the conference with a Mass which was not finally said as it was considered irreverent by church authorities.

Furthermore, when the incidence of all this Dalí phenomenon had not dissipated yet, his exhibition arrived in time to close the Biennial of Art. The new Dalí exhibition, with his recent ‘mystical’ stage, was inaugurated in the Palace of Libraries and Museums on January 22, 1952. It comprised a set of 32 works from the Lefevre Gallery in London, as well as a series of drawings and watercolors that illustrated the American edition of *Don Quixote*. Memorable queues of visitors showed revitalized interest in the Biennial of Art in Madrid, which was definitely closed together with Dalí's exhibition on February 24 (Cabañas Bravo, 1996b: 305-9, 318-26 and 503-14).

However, the great success achieved by this exhibition subsequently led to the important Anthological Exhibition of the 1<sup>st</sup> Hispano-American Biennial of Art, which was inaugurated by Panero on March 7 in the Museo del Parque de la Ciudadela in Barcelona, and closed on April 27, 1952. It was very successful, as it reached 80,000 new visitors. Dalí's supplementary exhibition again contributed to this success after he had left Madrid with a new controversy regarding his plagiarism, and was then integrally moved to Barcelona amidst great expectation, which originated long queues and kept his room full of visitors at all times—the opening hours and days had to be extended (Cabañas Bravo, 1996b: 627-49).



After his stay in Spain and the related controversies, Dalí did not have to wait long to get a reaction from the groups of exiled Spanish artists, as he realized that his attitude in the Madrid episode and his provocative stance towards Picasso was a source of great scandal. Thus, he chose to exhibit together with Spanish artists exiled in New York and took part in an exhibition commissioned by architect Josep Lluís Sert whose organization had begun at the end of 1952 and whose income was meant to support the scholarships given by the Spanish Department of the Barnard College, belonging to Columbia University. It was inaugurated on January 20, 1953 in the Schaeffer Galleries in New York under the title *Spanish Contemporary Paintings*, and its catalogue was prefaced by Juan Larrea.

Picasso's and Dalí's stances clashed again, yet not so directly and without the same media repercussion as in Madrid, in the following editions of the Biennial of Art. Thus, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Biennial of Art was inaugurated in Havana on May 18, 1954, and again found Picasso's opposition. In this case Picasso supported Cuban artists' previous protest against the exhibition through both manifestos and parallel exhibitions, even though special arrangements had been made this time for "the Spanish School in Paris" (Cabañas Bravo, 1996a: 93-110; 2007d: 57-62, and 134-84; 2013: 37-55).

Likewise, we must also recall the 3<sup>rd</sup> Biennial of Art, inaugurated in Barcelona on September 24, 1955. In April it was announced that Dalí would take part in it out of competition with a complete set of jewels offered by Alemny & Ertman. Besides, in August it was announced that Dalí would also contribute *The Sacrament of the Last Supper*, which he was then close to finishing, and had even proposed giving a sophisticated conference. Then Dalí launched his new proposal of beginning a new and spectacular painting based on rhinoceros horns within the exhibition program. However, the painter finally left for United States and nothing ever happened.

Unlike Dalí's, Picasso's works did appear in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Biennial of Art with scarce publicity as part of supplementary exhibitions out of competition. Fifty-seven works by Picasso were exhibited, including ceramics, old oil paintings and recent drawings. Most of them belonged to Spanish collectors. As on previous editions, the main aim was showing Spanish and Latin American vanguard background through the expected exhibition *Forerunners and Masters*, inaugurated on November 18 in the Palacio de la Virreina and including works by recently deceased painters, relevant Spanish figures and works by other outstanding names in Uruguayan and Argentinean art.

After these episodes in the 1950s, Dalí enjoyed enough occasions for new initiatives and provocations, although they only made him lose much of his credit in the most advanced Spanish artistic spheres, while Picasso managed to keep his in a much more serene and fighting manner. Perhaps the last episode that opposed them in Spain, after Picasso's death and the restoration of democracy after Franco's death, involved the actions taken for the return of *Guernica* from New York in 1981. The picture was considered "the last exile from the Civil War", as the fact was titled in the press. The new Director of Fine Arts Javier Tusell played an essential role in this return. He did not only account for the multiple steps that he had to take (Tusell, 1981: 58-78, and 1999: 259-77), but also for Dalí's approach to the Administration, at that time, with the intention of organizing a comprehensive anthological exhibition of his works in the Museo del Prado.

Thus, in April 1983, a year after Tusell's resignation, the Dalí anthological exhibition could finally be held: "This was —Tusell argued— the first step for all Spaniards to become heirs of not only Picasso but also Dalí, though both painters had maintained diametrically opposite political stances" (Tusell 1999: 306).

All in all, their legacy was wider, since —as previously analyzed— the position of both creators regarding what was happening in Spain and the official initiatives launched by the Spanish Administration on occasion of large international exhibitions do not only show and highlight that these painters never lost their connection to their homeland, but also that they also kept two contrasting ways to understand art and its mission, which finally led to two brilliant and dissimilar Spanish contributions to 20<sup>th</sup> century art.

### Acknowledgements

This paper was published within the research framework of the Spanish R&D&I National Plan *On the Republic: Networks and Outward and Inward Journeys in Spanish Art since 1931* (ref. HAR2011-25864).

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<sup>1</sup> They are two incomplete and complementary writings (Renau, 1981b) whose features have already been dealt with elsewhere, and some of their chapters have been reproduced (Cabañas Bravo, 2007a: 27 and 239, no. 1; 2007b: 142; 2007c: 207-40). On the other hand, their lengthy fragments were published by Renau himself on two different occasions. Renau himself pointed out that they were extracts and summaries of a book "currently under elaboration" (Renau, 1981a: 8, and 1982: 20-7).

<sup>2</sup> MIPBA September 19, 1936 Decree (Gaceta de Madrid, no. 264, September 20, 1936, p. 1899, with correction in the order of the painter's surnames on no. 269, September 25, 1936, p. 1969).